THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE

JAZZ INFORMATION

VOL. I, NO. 10 NOVEMBER 14, 1939 TEN CENTS

THE BANDWAGON

The Savoy Sultans begin a two-week engagement at Kelly's Stable on Thursday, the 23rd, replacing Coleman Hawkins. Spot will carry a WOR wire.

The Sunday afternoon jam session at the Green Haven Inn in Mamaroneck last week had a band including Happy Cauldwell, tenor, Willie "The Lion" Smith, piano, Hot Lips Page, Teddy Bunn and Zutty Singleton. Lips played Cafe Society on Monday night with a band including Buster Smith, alto and Lem C. Johnson, replacing Ben Smith, on tenor. Page has signed to record for Decca later this month.

Pete Brown subbed for Jimmy Mundy at the Onyx Monday night; Art Hodes was relief pianist.

Frankie Newton, at the Elks Rendezvous, has a band that includes Tab Smith on tenor (not alto, Tab's usual instrument), Don Frye on piano, Eddie Dougherty on drums, Joe Watts on bass, Billy Boan and Jimmy Jules, altos.

Woody Herman will return to the Famous Door November 28. Bob Crosby is playing to capacity houses at the Strand. Zurke at the Paramount. Norvo, booked into the Benjamin Franklin, Philadelphia, for six weeks, with a new personnel including Les Burness on piano, Allen Hanlon, guitar, and Russ Isaacs on drums. Johnny Blowers left Bernie to take Isaacs' place with Savitt.

Buddy Rich has left Artie Shaw to drum for Tommy Dorsey, replacing Cliff Leeman. Yank Lawson also left Dorsey's band. Ralph Hawkins, ex-Harry James drummer, now drums for Shaw. Tony Pastor and George Auld, tenors, reported leaving Art Shaw as soon as replacements can be found.

Tiny Bradshaw and the Sultans are playing the Savoy. Jimmy Dorsey will be there Sunday night, while Claude Hopkins plays the Golden Gate Ballroom. Fats Waller at the 125th Street Apollo.

The second "From Spirituals To Swing" concert, to be held at Carnegie Hall in December, will feature, among others, Ida Cox, Sonny Terry and Big Bill.

The John Kirby band, originally scheduled to open opposite Louis Armstrong in "Swingin' A Dream", is now out of the production. The Bud Freeman band takes its place.

MARSALA OPENS NEW SPOT

DANNY POLO JOINS SULLIVAN'S MIXED BAND AT CAFE SOCIETY

Danny Polo, American musician recently returned from a long stay in Europe, joined Joe Sullivan's black and white band when it opened at Cafe Society Tuesday night.

Polo, known mainly for his clarinet and alto work with Ambrose's English orchestra, plays tenor in the Sullivan band.

The mixed orchestra opened to a large and enthusiastic audience, and included, besides Sullivan, Polo and Murphy Steinberg, trumpet, three colored musicians: Edmund Hall, clarinet; Henry Turner, bass and Johnny Wells, drums. Hall is well known for his work with Claude Hopkins and Zutty Singleton. Wells is an ex-member of Jimmy Noone's band, while Turner is another alumnus of Claude Hopkins.

IDA COX WAXES FOR COLUMBIA

Ida Cox, old time blues singer, had her first record date in many years at Columbia recently.

Ten sides were cut in an all-day session, with a band consisting of Hot Lips Page, Edmund Hall, James P. Johnson, Artie Bernstein, Charlie Christians, Fletcher Henderson, and Lionel Hampton.

Two of the sides will be issued on the Vocalion race list within the next few weeks.

LEE WILEY RECORDS GERSHWIN SONGS

Lee Wiley, part Indian singer, recorded four tunes by the late George Gershwin Tuesday afternoon, accompanied by Max Kaminsky, Bud Freeman, Joe Bushkin, Artie Shapiro and George Wettling. A second date, to be held the following day, was to feature Fats Waller at the piano.

The records are to be released in a special Gershwin album by the Liberty Music Shops of New York.

NOTICE

Effective with the next issue, Jazz Information will be published every Friday. Watch for our next issue November 24.

TEDDY POWELL ALSO AT FIESTA; ART HODES JOINS MARSALA

Joe Marsala's orchestra is set to open at a new 42nd Street night spot, La Fiesta, Tuesday night. He will be playing opposite Teddy Powell's orchestra and a tango band.

Art Hodes, who has been playing piano at the Pirate's Den, joined the Marsala band this week, and will make his first appearance with the unit Tuesday. Marty Marsala on trumpet and Earl Murphy on bass are the only other members of the band to be definitely set. Possibility is strong, however, that Don Carter will rejoin Marsala on drums.

Marsala recently finished an engagement at Cafe Society. Powell, with his new band, played the Famous Door last month.

MUGGSY RECORDS FOR BLUEBIRD

Muggsy Spanier's Ragtime Band's first recording date under its new Bluebird contract took place last Friday. Four sides were waxed: At The Jazz Band Ball, I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate, Livery Stable Blues, and Dippermouth.

Pee Wee Russell, who was expected to play clarinet at the session, was not present, his place being taken by Rod Cless. Spanier, George Brunies, Bernie Billings, Joe Bushkin, Bob Casey and Don Carter comprised the rest of the band.

Another date is set for Friday of this week. Among the tunes to be recorded is Black And Blue.

PETE BROWN TO ONYX

Pete Brown's Jump Band opens at the Onyx Club on 52nd Street Friday, replacing Jimmy Mundy, who is taking his new orchestra on tour.

Stella Brooks, who opened at the Onyx Saturday night, will continue as featured singer. Marlo, recently pianist with the Spirits of Rhythm, will accompany her and play solo.

Brown, who recently concluded a long run at Kelly's Stable, will have an entirely new band, including: Harvey Davis, trumpet; Brown, alto; Stafford Simon, tenor; Fletcher Smith, piano; Thomas Bonny, bass; and Gene Brooks, drums.

JAZZ INFORMATION

JAZZ INFORMATION is published weekly throughout the year at Suite 900, 505 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y. Telephone, MUrray Hill 2-3755. Single copy, ten cents; four week trial twenty-five cents. Annual subscription $3.00, six months $1.50, four months $1.00. Life subscription $10.00.

Editorial Board

Ralph Gleason

Eugene Williams

Circulation Manager

Jean Rayburn

COLLECTORS' ITEMS

When Art Hodes' first piano solos are released this month by Dan Qualey on his Solo Art label, one of the finest and least appreciated of white pianists will perhaps be coming into his own.

An old Chicagoan who played with Tesch and Muggsy after he got his start in Wingy Mannone's band, Hodes' only previous records were two sides with Wingy and Tesch: Trying To Stop My Crying, and Isn't There A Little Love. On the first side, he played a fine solo half-chorus, which has often been credited to Joe Sullivan.

Artie hit New York about a year ago, and worked at different spots until he got the job he now holds, in Joe Marsala's orchestra. A few months ago he recorded the two solos now to be issued: Ross Tavern Boogie and South Side Shuffle.

From the titles of the numbers, and the fact that Hodes appears on the Solo Art list with such pianists as Jim Yancey, Cripple Clarence Lofton, Albert Ammons, Meade "Lux" Lewis and Pete Johnson, you might assume that he's a boogie woogie pianist. This is only partly true: the Ross Tavern number, named after a favorite musicians' hang-out, is in fact a boogie woogie, and the Shuffle a fast blues; but it would be unjust to Hodes to speak of him as a boogie woogie man.

He plays a better boogie woogie, probably, than any white man, and is a great admirer and close student of Pine Top Smith. But an equal favorite of his is Jimmy Johnson, from whom he takes a delicate touch, fine sense of melody, and a fine style for straight blues.

From his solo and ensemble work in the Mannone record alone, you might judge Hodes' high worth as a

(Continued on page four)

ROD CLESS

In their haste to find the increasingly rare records of the late Frank Teschmaker, the Chicago clarinetist, many collectors have overlooked a bit of his own music almost under their noses.

There's some of his style and tone and much of his driving force in the playing of George Roderick Cless, his close friend and former roommate. Cless (Rod to you) is the somber red-faced fellow whose clarinet is such an important feature of Muggsy Spanier's Ragtime Band, at Nick's in Greenwich Village.

You don't hear much of him unless you listen with care through George Brunies' tromboning. Then you'll catch the same rare vigor and heartfelt swing which Tesch put into his playing and behind his fellow-players.

Cless doesn't fuss with notes. He just squeezes them into the right places behind Muggsy's cornet and fills up holes in the ensembles. He drives the rest of the band along. But his listeners often fail to notice the power of his playing, which is the essence of the band's vitality.

He inherited that ability from Teschmaker, together with many ideas which he incorporates into his fluent style.

Cless has climbed the ladder of music the hard way --- high school and college bands, Friday and Saturday night jobs with his classmates, pit bands, ballroom orchestras and chop house jam bands. If it hadn't been for Tesch, he might have forgotten his early musical training for a steady job in his brother's business.

Attending high school in his home town, Des Moines, he played clarinet in the school band and at jam sessions in the gym when the teachers weren't listening. He went through Drake University (Liberal Arts and Commercial) and marched with the college band at football games.

When he met Gil Bowers, the pianist, in college, they formed a small band for dance jobs. "I didn't work my way through college with what I earned," he says. "Just half-way.

The bands that passed through town gave Cless the musical contacts that led him to Chicago after his graduation in 1926. Teschmaker asked him to be his roommate, and from the Chicagoan he absorbed that desire for musical creation which kept him from taking the proffered job. When their nightly work ended they used to head for the South Side---to the Midway Gardens where Muggsy was playing and to the Sunset Cafe where Louis Armstrong held forth. There the Chicago gang gathered -- Joe Sullivan, Gene Krupa, the MacPartland brothers, Johnny Mendel, Dave Tough, Floyd O'Brien, Jess Stacy and all the rest.

Cless' first steady job was with Bud Freeman at the Hollywood Barn. They generally made over $100 a week, played six hours a night for six nights and griped because their money came so hard. They wanted to get off the stand and sit in with the South Side bands.

The urge to go on the road finally hit Cless after two years of Chicago training. Frank Quartel took him in his band to New Orleans where they made some records for Brunswick. "They were so commercial I threw them away," Cless says.

After six months, he grew homesick and returned to Chicago. Teschmaker was ill and needed someone to fill his chair in Louis Panico's band, so he picked Cless for the job. After that there were many other bands, now all jumbled in his mind. Charles Pierce at the Pershing Ballroom, for instance. But the band personnels changed as rapidly as they do today, so he had one good job after another until Wall Street did its now historic nose-dive.

He doesn't like to think back on the tight-belted years that followed. Odd jobs and clarinet pupils pulled him through. Even after he joined Muggsy's band, he was teaching a class of fifteen would-be clarinets this summer.

When Spanier started his comeback last April, he insisted that Cless come with him. The clarinetist had often played with Spanier in former years. "Muggsy's cornet is right for me," he says. "I can follow him and fill in in the right places." He doesn't add what is so obvious to listeners --- that much of Spanier's inspiration comes from Cless.

Like Teschmaker, Cless is quiet and unassuming. He's usually wrapped up in musical thoughts even when he's not playing, and spends much of his time practising clarinet duets with Russ Campbell. He would sooner play in a jam band than in a large orchestra. "A big band is all right if it's musical," he says, "but I don't want to play in one of these big 'hot' bands.

The Spanier band was good; their music was what they knew and liked, and they soon found their groove. They knew, too, that the band was "right", and besides Muggsy's great cornet, it was Cless who made it that way. His forceful attack and

(Continued on page four)

NEW RECORDS

JIMMY MacPARTLAND'S Squirrels (HRS 1003, 1004) Panama - I'm All Bound Round With The Mason Dixon Line; Original Dixieland One-Step -- Eccentric. Jimmy MacPartland, trumpet; Joe Harris, trombone; Rosy McHargue, clarinet; Dick Clark, tenor sax; Jack Gardner, piano; Dick MacPartland, guitar; Country Washburn, tuba; George Wettling, drums.

These records were made in Chicago in the spring of 1936, under the supervision of "Squirrel" Ashcraft of the Chicago Rhythm Club, and are now issued for the first time on the Hot Record Society's label. They're unusual sides, made to prove the acceptability of two-beat music today; and the beautiful ensembles in the first half of Eccentric, for instance, ought to prove that Dixieland will be good as long as there are good men to play it. These are good records, and would have been even better if the curiously assorted men had been used to playing together.

Several other musical axes were ground at this date. It was Jimmy MacPartland's first appearance on wax since 1929, for one thing. The clarinetist, Rosy McHargue, and the pianist, Jack Gardner, are little known in hot circles (McHargue recorded with Trumbauer, and Gardner with Mannone and his present leader, Harry James). The bassist plays a tuba.

Taking these points one by one, we may observe first that MacPartland here plays very much as he always did: in a clear, simple, economical style, with great timing and fine self-possession. In spite of the stories, his lip seems adequate. McHargue is a surprise; he plays lovely Dixieland clarinet (reminiscent of Omer Simeon in the last chorus of Panama), with good tone, line, ideas and phrasing, as well as a special gift for striking solo entrances. Jack Gardner proves to be a more than satisfactory pianist, and his solos on Panama and Eccentric are excellent. Washburn's tuba is intelligently recorded, at low volume, so that it doesn't put itself forward unpleasantly. It's not at all objectionable, though a string bass might have added more swing to the rhythm section.

There's less to say of the other musicians. Wettling's name speaks for itself. Clark, who played with the Goodman orchestra at the time, supplements McHargue's clarinet in its busy counterpoint to the trumpet part. The weakest man in the band is Harris, with his imitative style and uneven playing.

The first half of Eccentric is all ensemble, and it's some of the loveliest Dixie all-in you could ask for. Entirely relaxed, playing in a perfect, easy tempo, the band moves along splendidly behind MacPartland. There follows Gardner's piano solo backed only by Wettling. A poor trombone chorus then leads back into an ensemble, but the band has tightened up, and hits off very weakly to the end.

The One-Step is taken at the proper fast time, opening and closing with good ensembles. Gardner, Clark. McHargue and Harris solo; Mason-Dixon, an unfamiliar tune, has solos by Clark, Gardner and McHargue sandwiched between the ensembles. Panama comes fast, as you would expect it, with solos by McHargue, MacPartland, Clark, Harris and Gardner. MacPartland's trumpet solo, his only one on the session, picks up well after an uncertain beginning, but doesn't compare to his beautiful ensemble work. Catch McHargue's clarinet in the last ensemble chorus.

PETE JOHNSON and his Boogie Woogie Boys, Lovin' Mama Blues; ALBERT, MEADE, PETE and their Three Pianos, Cafe Society Rag (Vo 5186). Johnson personnel: Hot Lips Page, trumpet; Buster Smith, alto sax; Pete Johnson, piano; Lawrence Lucie, guitar; Abe Bolar, bass; Eddie Dougherty, drums; Joe Turner, vocal.

Lovin' Mama is a good slow vocal blues, much better than the two sides by this pick-up band already issued. Joe Turner's singing would have been better for less tricks, but it sounds like the blues. The rhythm section holds together well behind Johnson's boogie, and Page plays some of his best trumpet on recent records. For the coupling Ammons, Lewis and Johnson recorded a sample of their worst style, all three pounding away noisily while Joe Turner mumbles a half-hearted plug for Cafe Society.

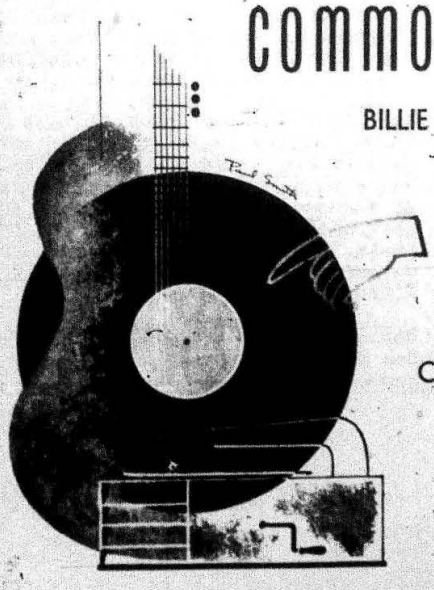
GLENN HARDMAN and his Hammond Five (Co 35) Upright Organ Blues -- Jazz Me Blues. Lee Costaldo, trumpet; Lester Young, tenor and clarinet; Glenn Hardman, electric organ; Jo Jones, drums; Freddie Green, guitar.

There's some very neat jazz on these two sides, in spite of the swingless and unmusical organ playing. Lee Costaldo, for one thing, plays fine trumpet on both sides; on the first, he takes one of those fine slow blues choruses with which many little known white trumpeters occasionally surprise us. Young's solo on the same side ranks with his best recent work; it's relieving to hear him play so well without the typical Basie rhythm behind him.

JOHN KIRBY'S Boys (Vo 5187) Royal Garden Blues -- Blue Skies. Charlie Shavers, trumpet; Russell Procope, alto sax; Buster Bailey, clarinet; Billy Kyle, piano; O'Neil Spencer, drums; John Kirby, bass.

This is what happens when cleverness is substituted for musical good sense. By trying to make six men sound like fourteen, filling in the gaps with badly-digested classicisms, John Kirby's band forfeits the right to be considered seriously as jazz or as anything else. And

(Continued on Page 4)



COMMODORE RECORDS

BILLIE HOLIDAY and her Orchestra

JESS STACY – Piano Solos

The BUD FREEMAN TRIO

EDDIE CONDON and his Band

CHU BERRY "LITTLE JAZZ" Ensemble

The KANSAS CITY FIVE and SIX

WILLIE "THE LION" SMITH

THE COMMODORE MUSIC SHOPS

144 EAST 42nd STREET and 46 WEST 52nd STREET

New York, New York, U. S. A.

NEW RECORDS

(Continued from page three)
no quantity of "hot solos", even by such good men as Shavers, Procope and Bailey, can make any difference. Kirby, by the way, is still a wonderful bass player.

COLEMAN HAWKINS' Orchestra (BB 10-477) She's Funny That Way -- Meet Dr. Foo. Tommy Lindsay, Joe Guy, trumpets; Earl Hardy, trombone; Jackie Fields, Eustis Moore, alto saxes; Coleman Hawkins, tenor sax; Gene Rodgers, piano; Oscar Smith, bass; Arthur Herbert, drums; Thelma Carpenter, vocal.

Those who maintain that Coleman Hawkins is now playing "greater tenor than ever" should be pleased with this first disc by his Kelly's Stable band, which features Hawkins in long solos on both sides. To our mind, it's hard to say which is the more disappointing: his sterile, meaningless improvisations on the slow tune, or his hopeless, heartbreaking attempt, in the Foo side, to play as powerfully and perfectly as he once did, which results in a strained and monstrous, squeaky sort of tone.

FLETCHER HENDERSON and his Orchestra (Varsity 6016) You Rascal You -- Tiger Rag. Probable personnel: Russell Smith, Rex Stewart, Bobby Stark, trumpets; Claude Jones, Benny Morton, trombones; Russell Procope, Edgar Sampson, Coleman Hawkins, saxes; Fletcher Henderson, piano; Clarence Holiday, guitar; John Kirby, bass; Walter Johnson, drums.

Two more Crown sides by Fletcher Henderson, this time on the Varsity race list. Again, they're interesting only for a few good solos: by Hawkins, Stewart and (probably) Jones.

ALIX COMBELLE, Crazy Rhythm; FREDDY TAYLOR, Blue Drag (Royale 1778). Combelle personnel: Alix Combelle, tenor sax and clarinet; Stephane Grappelly, piano; Django Reinhardt, Joseph Reinhardt, Pierre Ferret, guitars; Louis Vola, bass. Taylor personnel: Freddy Taylor, Charlie Johnson, trumpets; Chester Lanier, clarinet and saxes; Fletcher Allen, tenor sax and arranger; John Ferrier, piano; Oscar Alleman, guitar; Eugene D'Hellemmes, bass; William Diemer, drums.

Two sides recorded in Paris in 1935, and repressed from Ultraphone masters. On the label, Taylor's accompaniment is incorrectly credited to the Quintet of the Hot Club of France. Both sides are afflicted with French rhythm sections and arranging. The main interest comes from the tenor solos, on the first side by Combelle and on the second by Allen. Combelle's clarinet is inferior, and Taylor's muted trumpet undistinguished.

GENE KRUPA'S Orchestra (Co 35262) Hodge Podge - On The Beam. With an Ellington composition and an original arranged in similar style, Krupa shows off a very competent big band. Alto, trumpet and piano take good solos, the ensembles are well done, and there's little pretentiousness.

MILT HERTH TRIO (De 2818) Scatterbrain -- Church Mouse On A Spree. Milt Herth, organ; Billy Kyle, piano; O'Neil Spencer, drums and vocal. Playing jazz on the organ is a doubtful job at best, but this trio plays light music, not hot. Herth, being a well-equipped organist with some flair for swing, does a good job. Kyle and Spencer play adequately.

ROSETTA HOWARD and the Harlem Blues Serenaders (De 7658) He's Mine All Mine -- Hog Wild Blues. Rosetta Howard sings these two blues well, but the accompaniment, featuring Charlie Shavers and Buster Bailey, is inferior.

WOODY HERMAN'S Orchestra (De 2817) Midnight Echoes -- I'm Coming Virginia. The band that plays the blues shows too much classical influence: in its arrangements, and, via Shaw, in Herman's clarinet. Some of the solos are good.

AL COOPER and the Savoy Sultans (De 2819) Little Sally Walter -- Love Gave Me You. The sourest of Savoy bands turns out two typical sides. If there's anything worse than the neat, mechanical riffing of the big "swing" bands, it's the tasteless, out-of-tune riffing of the little "jump" bands.

HARLEM HAMFATS (Vo 05179) Oh Babe, Has Your Money Come? - You Brought Me Everything But Love. At their worst the Hamfats sound rather like the Savoy Sultans, and this is the worst. Odell Rand still plays fine clarinet.

JAZZ GILLUM and his Jazz Boys (BB 8287) Hard Drivin' Woman -- Got To Reap What You Sow. A fine piano and guitar provide the rhythm behind Gillum, with obbligatos by a good alto sax player.

ROD CLESS

(Continued from page two)
constant weaving around the other musicians' ideas consolidated their music into an intricate and close pattern that sent chills down listeners' spines. They felt it and said, "It swings." There's no need to elaborate on their opinion.

The band's reputation came east and Nick, who is smart about the talent he books, signed them after hearing their first record. He and Muggsy are to be applauded for bringing Cless to the attention of New Yorkers. Jazz Information hopes that nothing will interfere with the fine jazz which Muggsy Spanier and his Ragtime Band are giving Nick's customers.

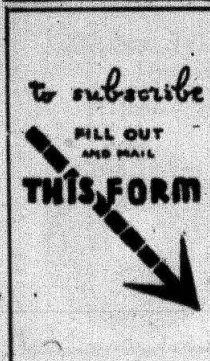
COLLECTORS' ITEMS

(Continued from page two)
jazz pianist. His style is simple, powerful and entirely sincere. He plays the old tunes: Boy In The Boat, Tin Roof Blues, Snowy Morning, Mecca Flat, Four Or Five Times, Apex Blues; or improvises on the standards, or popular tunes, always in his solid, full-handed fashion.

But mainly he's a student of the piano in itself, always working to get more out of his instrument. Few musicians take their job more seriously. Between his years of experience playing with fine white and colored musicians, and his earnest search for the music in himself, Art Hodes has become one of the few really noteworthy white pianists. He's not the most polished, nor the most "advanced", but for honest jazz piano based, as all honest jazz must be, on the blues, you'd have to look far to find a pianist better worth listening to.

* * *

Harry E. Avery of Alameda, California, sent in some interesting information on the Whoopee Makers, among other things. Under the name of Jimmy McHugh's Bostonians, Baby (Velvetone 1795) has master number 147495, which lines up near the Harmony Whoopee Stomp. As the Cotton Pickers, Hot Heels (3912) and Some Of These Days (3903) on Romeo 1009; St. Louis Blues (2357) and Railroad Man (3591) on Romeo 852. As the Dixie Daisies, Digga Digga Doo (3502) and 'Cause I'm In Love (3503) on Romeo 808; Bugle Call Rag (3562) on Romeo 839. Some more of this next week.



JAZZ INFORMATION
Suite 900
505 Fifth Avenue
New York City

Trial: 4 issues, 25¢
Four months - $1.00
Six months - $1.50
One year - $3.00

I am enclosing _____ for a subscription to JAZZ INFORMATION for a period of _____.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____